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## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

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*Marxism versus Socialism.* By VLADIMIR G. SIMKHOVITCH.  
New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1913. 8vo, pp. xvi+298.  
\$1.50.

It is an admirable public service to put the body of this criticism, which first appeared in the *Political Science Quarterly*, into the present volume. Nowhere better than in its thirteen chapters will one find a conscientious and effective criticism of the Marx tradition.

Older orthodox economists had their own way of slaying Marx, but the execution was so little final that it had always to be renewed. It was not until criticism passed from the enemy to the socialist fellowship itself, that the legend of infallibility which gathered about this remarkable man began to weaken. The men trained to economics among the Fabians were raising havoc with the "theory of value" nearly twenty-five years ago. Bernstein followed, as did Sorel in his *Décomposition du Marxisme*, to complete the work. Yet in many ways Simkhovitch's service is more complete and more satisfactory. He leaves us from the start in no doubt about his position. He pays his tribute to the "economic interpretation of history" as "a great advance in historical methodology and social philosophy"—as a theory, even, "perhaps the most robust ever advanced." Yet this chief contribution he sets down as "the crudest and most unfinished doctrine in the field of social philosophy." His ground for this stricture is that the theory throws light on the *changes* in things rather than on things themselves; that while it helps us about the record of the past, it is helpless in dealing with coming events.

It is, however, the real distinction of this volume that its author has done a work of incomparable thoroughness on the literary material necessary to competent judgment. Beginning with popular misunderstandings about the theory of value, together with an outline of socialism as presented by Marx, he takes up the economic interpretation of history, reserving the theory of value for the close of the volume (chap. xii).

Between these is given a concise and trenchant discussion of Marx's attitude toward "concentration" in industry and agriculture, the disappearance of the middle class, increasing misery, status of the wage-earner, the class struggle, crises, and the cataclysm. All that is best in the syndicalist criticism by George Sorel confirms the author's main

thesis. The deductions from the "economic interpretation" furnish all the fuel for their syndicalist fire. The analysis in this volume is much more penetrating. It does not, like able Socialists (as David and Schönbank), gaily throw overboard the theory of "increasing misery," as if this were doing slight wrong to the master. Simkhovitch shows how disturbing this abandonment is to the very structure of Marx's system. The passage is worth quoting (p. 127):

And yet the true-blue Marxists are unwilling to drop this theory. They realize that in dropping it they are dropping Marxism, but they do not realize that in interpreting it away they are interpreting Marxism away. The whole construction of Marx's *Capital* leads up to the doctrine of increasing misery. In rejecting this theory, one rejects also Marx's theory of population, his theory of wages, his theory of accumulation of capital. And if what is left be Marxism, it is Marxism with Marx left out. Not only is his theory shattered, but what rational foundation is there left for his vision and hope, his goal and inspiration—the breakdown of capitalism and the social revolution? These conceptions of Marx as well as his idea of the general crisis are based upon the progressively increasing misery of the working class.

Very wisely the author allows Marx (see chap. xii) to show his own inconsistency, as in the incurable antagonism between the law of value and the theory of wages; and again, the unhappy dilemma involved in the Marx dialectics (p. 251) should be given:

. . . . Granted that there is nothing fixed, nothing constant but the constancy of change. Marx assumes this; yet he is constantly operating with logical concepts, which are in their very nature unchangeable, inflexible, permanent, and constant. If  $a$  is  $a$ , it cannot be  $a+c$  or  $a-c$ . Yet in the historical process that presupposes constant change,  $a$  cannot remain the same  $a$  as it was at the start. To make this concrete: Marx is dealing with classes, tendencies, etc. But from his own viewpoint his classes cannot help changing in character. The same thing is true about all his concepts, whether they are "crisis," "capitalism," "concentration," or "revolution." Yet while the historical process is battering, changing, or even destroying the inner content of all these concepts, the Marxian socialist operates with them as with absolute and unchanging entities and works out "scientifically," by negation of the negation, our distant future!

It adds greatly to the usefulness of the volume that the long and frequent citations which appeared in German in the *Quarterly* articles are here translated.

It is not alone the heretics like Bernstein who do service for the text but, even more effectively, those of the faithful like Kautsky and Frau Luxemburg.

JOHN GRAHAM BROOKS

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.